

Head for the wild this spring

By Joe Rooper
Of the Emerald

This spring break do something wild and enjoy your vacation under the stars. You should see some of the places you never had time for.

Hell's Canyon is more than a name. This 662,000-acre recreational area is the deepest and most rugged canyon in North America.

Harnessing the waters of the Snake River, Hell's Canyon can be reached via Interstate 80 or U.S. Highway 95.

It offers a land of many contrasts from the desert-like canyon floor along the Snake River to the alpine lakes in Idaho.

Backpackers and campers may be interested in a 27-mile climb into the Wallowa-Whitman forest. The hike will bring travelers to Hat Point Lookout on the Oregon side of the Snake River.

So bring a backpack or a friend. The fresh air will already be waiting.

Thousands of years ago, a 12,000-foot volcano erupted, leaving behind a tremendous hole. Crater Lake, six miles long, four miles wide and 1,932 feet deep is a remarkable creation.

Known for its brilliant blue color, the lake's 20-mile shoreline is encircled by lava cliffs 500 to 2,000 feet high. Various trails lead hikers to several high points along the rim, and down 628 feet to the lake.

Snowshoe hikes are offered on Saturdays and Sundays, with rangers leading the way. Cross-country skiing is also available, but overnight trips must be reported to park officials.

Crater Lake is located along Highway 97 and admission is \$2.

Tired of the rain, but still want to get wet? Try something hot. Lava Hot Springs, a state-owned resort, is a health and pleasure escape.

It's named for the many mineral springs that boil out of lava rocks at 110 degrees. Geologists contend that the mineral pools have been the same temperature for 50 million years.

The mineral pools are located in southeast

Idaho on Highway 30 near another hot spot. Soda Springs. They are open 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., with a \$1.75 admission.

If you're thinking about Washington, try Olympic National Park, a scenic wilderness extending from glacier-clad mountains to the ocean shore. The park is west of Seattle and accessible through Highway 101. Admission is free, but rain may be included.

The park has glaciers, lakes, rain forests and 57 miles of unspoiled coastline.

Mount Olympus, which rises within a few miles of the sea, provides rugged and spectacular cliffs. But only skilled mountain climbers should try scaling the peaks.

The area is full of wildlife, with an estimated 5000 elk inhabiting the park. A great variety of birds also live there, including the bald eagle.

If you're planning a day trip, lodging can be found in nearby Port Angeles.

Take a trip to the past. Sequoia National Park, located near the San Joaquin Valley in central California, is studded with the largest living things — giant sequoia trees.

Only trails run through the wilderness, preserving the beauty for those on foot or horseback. Saddle horses are for rent in several Sequoia locations, including Giant Forest at Wolverton, General Grant Grove, Cedar Grove and Owens Valley.

Admission to the park is \$2, with pets permitted only on a leash.

There are 47 campgrounds and numerous lakes. So take a friend and turn back a page or two.

North of Sequoia and accessible from Highway 120 is Yosemite National Park. This mountainous region on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada is also known for its giant sequoia trees. Yosemite is a favorite of campers and hikers.

Yosemite Village has several motels and cabins for rent. It's structured around the Merced River in the center of Yosemite Valley.

There are several waterfalls in Yosemite, including Upper Yosemite Falls which drops 1,430 feet, a height equal to nine Niagara Falls.

Admission to the park is \$3.

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and lodging can be found at Diamond Lake Resort.

East of the Cascades, but well worth the drive, is Spout Springs. It's located 40 miles southeast of Walla Walla on Highway 204 and just northeast of Pendleton.

Lift tickets are \$10 on the weekends and \$7 during mid-week. Night skiing is also available for \$6. Accommodations can be found at Milton-Freewater, which is 27 miles away, or Elgin, just 18 miles away.

Take advantage of the break and enjoy one of your favorite mountains, or bring a friend.

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